

EXPERIMENTAL
KINDERGARTEN #4



What inspired you to make movies beginning with Mutant Massacre 1?

1. The tone of the BLIND DEAD

Had you worked on any other pictures before that movie was released?

SCHOOL PROJECTS

How did you start to sell your work in magazines like Fangoria and Film Threat?

I use to buy the mags.
ANYWAY SO TRYED ADS.

How did you get into contact with Joe Franklin and Joe Lapenna?

My FARTHER New Joe F-RANKLIN

What kind of response did you get to your movies?

I showed
mutant MASSCRE
ON TV

How do you feel about the fans you've continued to make with your movies?

That ok IF there is NO
SEX in the Movies

How would you describe your movies to someone who hasn't seen them?

some thing great and
you will love them.
all

Late Again

This issue is late, overdue by at least a year given the productive burst that saw me getting *EK* #1-3 out in a single year's span. That's fine, zines are always late. With that delay has come a shift in focus to some degree. This issue was supposed to be about challenging yourself, confronting things that make you miserable yet you love. Not in the form of personal screeds and diatribes, but in what we always deal in: movies, bad food, and whatever other junk captures our attention before passing out. Hence the "Aesthetic Sadism" essay meant to lead this thing off, a piece I wrote nearly a year ago and have changed very little. I still like that sensibility, and it's a category I'll continue to probe as we head off into the future of #5 and beyond. Research Anderson's *Capriccio Sangria* rankings also fall under this category, even if there's decidedly nothing aesthetic about that supercharged swill. There's nothing sadistic about his best-of lists, however, which are right on the money and worth paying attention to for the best of 2020 in music and wrestling.

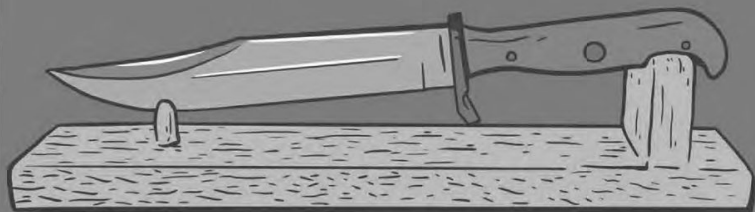
Not necessarily tied into the realm of sadism, I happened to track down director Jim Larsen, responsible for the indispensable shot-on-video feature *Nigel the Psychopath* and the outrageous *Buttcrack!*. Jim gave me an amazing interview, more thorough than I ever could have hoped for, and I'm happy to have it included here. I want to thank Jim for all of the time and effort he put into his responses, which made me appreciate his movies so much more.

Then down the line came our own Peter Vilardi (MC Freeman) with a handful of forays into weird and horror fiction, something fully in line with my own interests. After some deliberation, it was clear that "The Munchman" was the right title for *EK*, and along with some incredible illustrations by friend-of-the-zine Griffin Scanlan, we have the best put-together thing this zine has ever done. I'm thrilled to be offering Peter's fiction debut here, offered as a full-color centerpiece, it's the kind of exclusive that makes it all worth putting this thing out.

Tying things up into a nice package is my brief interview with Carl Sukenick (opposite this page). If my words in the "Aesthetic Sadism" piece aren't clear enough, maybe this will give you a taste of what I'm trying to get at in discussing his movies. I don't understand his letter either, but I love it nonetheless.

The layout looks better (if not a little rough), the content is richer, and I think the whole package is all-around more satisfying. Maybe we're getting better at this stuff

Vince Albarano/albara_v1@denison.edu



Capriccio Sparkling Sangria Power Rankings

by Research Anderson

Consider this my penance for drinking Capriccio on a work night (again). If y'all have somehow not heard about this evil elixir, I implore you to stop reading right now and protect your innocence. For those of you have been anointed into the dark order of Capriccio drinkers, I have some takes to share. As of last night, I've officially had a full serving of all 4 flavors of this 13.9% sparkling sangria from hell: Original, Watermelon, Rose, and White. I've had some time to reflect on all the nights cut tragically short by it's wrath and feel that I can now objectively speak on the enjoyability of each variety. Let's get this over with.

Author's Note: Since this piece was written, I have been informed that a passionfruit Capriccio has emerged on the market. I would love to tell you I don't plan on trying this flavor, but that would probably be a lie. Maybe I'll write about that one in the next issue or something, I only pray that more flavors have not been released by then.

#1: Watermelon:

Among the newest varieties, watermelon Capriccio almost made me forget why I hate this shit so much in the first place. You may be shocked to hear that there is no discernable watermelon flavor, as the profile lends itself more to eating every single flavor of Airhead at once. On a positive note, it's much easier on the jaw as there is no chewing involved. Jury's still out on the teeth, though. Now, I know what you're thinking: "Research, this sounds awful. Why is this your top-rated flavor?" Well, first and foremost: I fucking love candy. Additionally, I regret to inform you that while this may sound unfavorable, it's pretty much all downhill from here.



CAPRICCIO
Sangria

#2: White:

Honestly, this may be the most innocuous of all the flavors. Allegedly, there's elderberries in this one, but overall, it basically tastes like straight up apple juice. With most of the other strains of Capriccio, the ridiculous ABV is very prevalent upfront, but the white is actually fairly pleasant to sip on. That being said, I don't think I've ever finished a bottle as it seems to send me into a deep slumber every time. I can't fully account for spurious variables that may have altered my propensity to fall asleep while drinking this specific flavor, but there's definitely a correlation. It's pretty good though, and if you're having trouble sleeping, it may be just what the doctor ordered.

#3: Rose:

I'm currently still reeling from last night's encounter with the newest flavor to join the Capriccio family. This shit is so goddamn sweet, it's truly unbearable. Think Crystal Lite mixed with Naturday. In a failed attempt to dilute this highly concentrated pseudo-hooch, I cut it with some mango White Claw and Topo Chico sparkling mineral water. It was a valiant effort, but even water-based beverages were no match. It goes without saying, but there is no trace of Rose flavor to be found in this drink. In fact, I wouldn't say that most of the Capriccio varieties even resemble sangria. While I've found other flavors to be sleep inducing, I got some of the worst sleep in recent memory after finishing this sinister cocktail. Will not be revisiting.

#4: Original: In an attempt to frame things positively, the fact that the original flavor is at the bottom of this list indicates that the masterminds behind Capriccio are only getting better at this twisted science experiment of a beverage. While the other flavors are all highly deceptive in their advertising, this one is pretty much exactly what it says it is: 13.9% sparkling sangria. The sweetness isn't necessarily an issue, but the concentrated boozy taste is the strongest in this one to the point where it's not even enjoyable. I swear there's pulp at the bottom of these bottles. While it may be relatively all bad, the current landscape of sugary, comically alcoholic beverages owes its livelihood to Capriccio and I fear we will not soon escape its grasp.



CAPRICCIO
Sangria



Aesthetic Sadism, or: the joys of the Unwatchable

My tastes for the unpleasant, unloved, and plain repugnant are no secret among those who know me. Hence my interest in free jazz, Rumpelstiltskin, and shot-on-video horror movies. But beyond these acquired interests, there exist a handful of things I enjoy which seem to deny the question of pleasure at all to most anyone else. Music is an obvious one, but for every sixteen-minute heavy psych blast, those experiences are easily forgotten or even interrupted. The true core of my divisive tastes are the handful of truly difficult films I find myself attracted to.

Coming down the stairs, his leg slowly and straightening as he felt for a lower step, his arms reaching out to steady himself.

Shot-on-video horror may seem to fit the bill, and as far as something like *Black Devil Doll from Hell* there's no doubt that it's prohibitively, yet gloriously offensive. There are plenty of these examples, many of which have found their rebranding as vehicles for ironic appreciations and childish mockery due to their obvious failings. But they also offer an easy access point for most viewers, who can latch onto the films' sheer failures and comical over-ambitions as means of appreciating their peculiarities. What I want to talk about here, then, are the types of films that essentially negate any sort of traditional appreciation and are a chore to watch. That kind of effect—whether sheer joyless badness, disturbing qualities or something ineffable and harder to grasp—is what separates the most exemplary works of cinematic art from the chaff of the "so-bad-it's-good" dreck clogging up most lists of this nature. These are the movies I put on to punish people, and especially myself.

straw, and the hardness of old china; and the revolution that reared up in her came into her throat in bitter vomit that she swallowed desperately. She pushed herself to her hands and knees, and felt the sharp dig of the thing's fingers pierce her thighs. She kicked out, and heard its body slide across the floor and thud against the wall. Then she was clawing her

Carl Sukenick's Personal Nightmares



I've

written elsewhere about Carl Sukenick's damaged filmography, yet every time I find myself discussing him from a different angle, concerned with different aspects of his baffling little features. I'll say it countless times for the rest of my life, but there is no filmmaker more confounding, upsetting, and disturbed than Sukenick. Even I'm not always comfortable when I watch his films, but that's a large part of his appeal to me in the end. After so many years watching and ingesting every bizarre and horrifying film I can find, I realize that my tastes are fairly concrete. What really stands out are the most singular experiences, particularly when they exemplify personal worldviews and perspectives, and often those are the ones that aren't necessarily enjoyable. But they stick with me, more than any Italian splatter flick, more than the highest-concept avant-garde experiment. Carl Sukenick's deranged home movies stay in my brain because there's no unseeing or forgetting them once they've polluted my evening. And for this reason, as well as his unflinching honesty in offering up every little piece of himself for the camcorder, he is an essential part of my world. Every time I put in one of his tapes, I dread what may come next—whether it be a meandering hour-long sci-fi

silently to herself. She went back out into the middle of the entry hall and faced the door.

chance adventure or a thirty-minute video diary that unsettles more than any written confessional ever could, like being held hostage by the screen. That uncertainty and unpredictability is not always a strength, but it certainly defines his creations against all other expectations I have for filmmaking.

room and kitchen, and maybe a sewing room or office or something of that sort, and she figured that Jessica would have chosen the most dangerous.

They went up or higher, and disappeared into the dark and shadowy corridors, climbing them.

With curiosity, she opened the doorway at the end of the shorter, narrower hallway, into the kitchen, and it would never be the same. The iron cookstove and the cupboards were white, and stretched from wall to wall.

long as if it had been intended for many people, a

I have about a half dozen of Carl's movies, and they're essentially the same: some sort of alien/mutant/monster force attacks suburban New York and Carl himself plays the hero, who sees fit to shout at his cast of neighbors and family members and smoke countless cigarettes. The effect is essentially that of a lucid nightmare, one that lasts seventy minutes at most but may as well be infinite. Footage is recycled, editing does not exist or is overused, and Carl's in-the-red monotone berates you without pause. One thing that stands out as particularly troubling is not quite knowing where

overgrown with vines, bushes, and trees, but over in one corner of the fenced area she caught a glimpse



Carl is coming from, in just about every possible sense. Sure, he's making attempts at blockbuster features, and there's no question that his efforts and entirely sincere, removed from a camp equation by nature of intent. But there's clearly something *off* that's harder to place. There are no identifiable influences or allusions, save to his own insular world of videotapes, and his experiments come less than fully formed, yet without any sort of aesthetic baggage. Even the tempting avant-garde touchstones that he seems to fit more are ultimately incompatible. Carl has some sort of developmental disability, which is made all the more clear in his later diary-esque features shot in his group home. So there's a certain outsider art sensibility that makes itself apparent. But as with so many cases in this mold, there's a discomfort with simply appreciating the films as works of damaged, stunted genius; they're essentially manic anti-films constructed from some child-like sensibility. And even if there's a risk of looking down on Carl and his facile attempts at entertainment, there's also an unease with him featuring bored-looking naked women and using his camera as a means of interacting with them, as if actualizing some sort of fantasy he could never manifest in any other form. Even if the intent is pure, there's something unsettling and distressing to Carl's early work. And by the time of his later videos, there's an unshakeable sadness at the deterioration of his condition and living status, if not his vision and ambition.

I've found only one key to trying to comprehend his work, and it's far from ideal. His most notable/infamous features are his earliest: the two *Mutant Massacre* films as well as *Alien Beasts*, all of which were released around 1991 and were heavily advertised in *Fangoria*, *Film Threat*, and other genre magazines. These three films are the same exact work, which is to say that among their three-and-a-half-hour cumulative runtime, they share roughly the same two hours of

footage. This base is reshuffled and composed to make three distinct narratives that still fail to make any sense and feature the same five people (including Carl's parents). Characters go unnamed in one film yet feature prominently; the same characters are named in another in their only onscreen appearance. Working sideways through the messy collage of footage, a picture emerges which allows understanding of the work's flow. Granted, it's a flow that must be taken completely on its own terms, and as an exercise it requires an amount of fortitude I doubt most people have. All I can really say is that Carl's movies offer me experiences I can't find anywhere else, and they stick with me. I'm just not entirely sure why I find those qualities attractive quite yet.

Hideous Repetition: Alan Clarke's *Elephant* way!"

Annabelle.

"I'm not Annabelle. I'm Victor!"
British director Alan Clarke is best known for his series of grim
social realist films made for the BBC, namely *Scum*, *Made in*



Britain, and *The Firm*. This forty-minute short is the crystallization of his socio-political concerns and naturalistic techniques. It is also his most difficult to watch in every sense, stripped of all conventional expectations for cinema by dispensing with narrative, character, and ultimately sanity. The entire film is the recreation of eighteen shootings which occurred as part of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. What remains is a dozen-and-a-half set pieces, isolated violent incidents linked by only the implication of larger societal factors and the specific means of the violence itself. What is lacking is any dialogue, exposition, or rest from the incessant bloodshed. Somehow there's something hypnotic, utterly immersive in the film's flow, and whatever can be said about the nature of its content, Clarke made a visually stunning piece of work. Demonstrating the most realized execution of his penchant for Steadicam footage and extreme tracking shots, there's a perpetual motion to everything occurring, even as the same events are repeated time and again. And the violence can be ugly, with the randomness and mundanity of the killings emphasizing the unpredictable nature of such acts overall.

In a sense, this is Clarke's most purely realistic film: there are no directorial gestures to sway viewer sentiment, nor is there an inherent message save the presentation of real-life violence. Even the aesthetic touches he brings to it via the impressive camera techniques fit more within a vérité mold than calling our attention to the artifice of the project. The

became someone named Annabelle. And in that house were dolls. Annabelle, a They talked heard in he moved. And when she t they called heard her? really hear

"Jessica!

The call though it sou was. And mad her, just impatient Jessica, I just get a bit imp

trouble with this, of course, is the fact that a film depicting only horrendous acts becomes itself an aestheticized work of art. What prevents any sort of pleasure in this case, I contend, is that there's so little to grasp onto beyond the smooth look and feel of it that there's no use trying to enjoy it in any traditional manner. There is no overarching moral agenda, and the film's tone is unremittingly bleak. In learning nothing about what we are watching, the film presents us with only the

events themselves, stripping context away as an unnecessary affectation. Despite having a larger body count than most slasher flicks, I doubt that anyone watching is cheering on the violence and approving of the characters' actions. As much a risk as overly aestheticized and glamorous violence may be, Clarke's overall point is fairly clear.

In all the years I've been aware of this short, I've only watched it twice in all that time. It exists at a dead-end point as far as its critical function: as good as it looks and flows, there's no real opportunities for deeper analysis, simply because there are no lines to read between. It's possibly the most literal, matter-of-fact film I've ever seen, and because we're accustomed to expect some form of complexity from works of art, it negates an entire component of our traditional viewing practices. Not only are we denied any relational or identifying experience, but there's also a complete lack of duplicity on the part of the filmmaker. There's no need for suspension of disbelief, even if we know the shootings aren't real, the documentary grit of the proceedings serves an uneasy reminder that they are rooted in actuality. All that's really left is an appreciation of the craft, which is hard not to admire, but itself becomes monotonous and ugly as one scene feeds into the next. This could be the most accessible film on this list, and it's certainly the most straight-forward in terms of technique. It's also the least digestible, and most socially relevant. Maybe it's an important work, and it certainly makes sense among Clarke's better-known dramas, but it's bound to remain the bastard child of his career.

She stood up. The dolls had closed in on her. They were poised in a half-circle around her. She moved toward the doll house to the corner of the room. She stood, feeling uneasy again. Would they let her through?

The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes: Stan Brakhage's Proto-Shockumentary



hem all the attention to the things shirt she and from e and the set them shes and rware. It ish it on re much

g in the shuttered ng there, left in the

the papa doll moved drew a long t where she

ne like the the mama, and, Victor, as if the is feet.

Je Given the intellectual rigor and ceaseless visual experimentation he brought to his films, there isn't much of Stan Brakhage's work that is easily recommendable to general audiences. That all said, there's no question that *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes* is his most divisive statement. All thirty minutes of the film's runtime are spent within the Allegheny County Morgue, and as a result we get the full tour of the facility and see its various operations. On one level the film appeals to a prurient sensibility in the sheer visceral curiosity it satisfies. However, it deviates from the later trend of shockumentaries and death footage compilations in being structured, watchable and worthwhile rather than a morally ambiguous curiosity. On top of this, given his serious pedigree and its place within his *Pittsburgh Trilogy*, the film also establishes itself more as serious meditation than gross-out sleaze. It may be grueling to watch, but it isn't exploitative film

swooped in to surround her, to squeeze between her and the painting of the beautiful mother with her baby. T

any traditional sense, which embodies its central paradox. Art films aren't meant to be entertaining on a surface level, but neither are they expected to be so viscerally off-putting. In offering a work that is both serious and contemplative yet also shocking and base, Brakhage innovated something far more challenging than any of his avant-garde cohorts while outpacing the later "need" for gross-out compilations.

I'll be the first to admit that most people don't simply sit down to watch an experimental film for the sheer joy of the viewing experience. Taken this way, it's kind of silly to cordon off a subset of the style as particularly unappealing; but that's simply the pure visceral nature of Brakhage's short documentary. Much like Clarke's *Elephant*, there's no relenting, no break from the visual onslaught that fills the screen. Apart from the obvious difference in real and fake gore, *Act of Seeing* is more taxing because it builds, from the relative tranquility of the surgical preparation on through the pure corporeal horror of the final ten minutes. Clarke's film plateaus, offering variations on a single act; Brakhage takes you further and further into the maw of human fragility. Just feeling the thud of her hands against yielding bodies.

as much as we recoil from images of real gore—whether violent or medical in nature—so too is there an instinct to shy away from reminders of mortality. Without providing a lick of context, Brakhage paints a larger portrait of the end of life in some of its many forms. We don't get to know any of the bodies, nor their stories, and the same goes for the pathologists and staff of the morgue. Instead, we know them from within, more intimately than we understand even ourselves as a result of the camera's unblinking eye. With only a few exceptions, the short is stripped of aesthetic affectations and offers little more than a vérité presentation of the beginning of the afterlife. Faces and scalps are peeled from skulls, torsos left gaping and hollow, and limbs and genitals are prodded and manipulated. Bruises, contusions, and open wounds form an



alternative palette of post-mortem vibrancy. There's more, of course, but the point isn't how much you can take. It's a big picture: whether you can stomach it or not, this is the end for us all.

I've likely watched this film more than any other discussed here, and I'll be the first to admit that's pretty fucked up. Apart from *Elephant*, it's the most conventionally approachable from a cinematic standpoint. There's no cognitive disconnect in the presentation and reception of images like Suenick's videos, nor is there the interrupted feeling of the brief sketches we have capturing Nitsch's larger visions. What the camera sees is what we get; the title being the literal translation of the word autopsy, the filmic content itself stays true to this outline as well. At its core, it's an incredibly simple idea, merely showing

It was a cry, as soft as the whisper of a mouse in the wall, but and help S doll broken balance he spun sideways on one leg, as a permanent balance were impossible for him.

"Oh poor Vic," Jessica whispered. "I'm so sorry."
Victor. Victor.

"Victor. I know. That's your name. And that's Vesta, and that's Mama and Papa doll. But . . ."
Where's Annabelle?

She came
and Hermann Nitsch: Fragmented Destruction of the doll house

This one isn't necessarily a singular work or filmography as much as an entire body of performances, and in a certain sense an entire art movement. The Vienna Actionists have long drawn controversy and notoriety for their hyper-violent and sexual performance and film pieces, running the gamut from blasphemous assaults on religion to modern Dionysian rituals drenched in animal offal. Hermann Nitsch is likely the most famous of the Vienna Actionists, and certainly the longest active member of that movement. Despite this, his work, or at least the limited filmed evidence of it, is some of the milder within the Actionist oeuvre, lacking the self-mutilation of Günter Brus, and bearing little of the sadistic sexual deviance actualized in known abuser Otto Muehl's scat films. Brus' work is hard to find at this point in time, and Muehl's work—even disregarding his history of sexual abuse—is inherently unpleasant and awful to a degree that even repels me. So perhaps by result of personal standards rather than any larger scheme, Nitsch's punishing art is what stands out to me as the most significantly sadistic performance pieces available.

There are no coherent narrative or aesthetic elements to really grasp; these weren't intended as films to begin with, they just

ended up that way in a limited capacity. I can't speak on what it's like to witness one of Nitsch's actions live, but I would imagine the impact is all the more visceral given one's proximity to the splatter, as well as the inescapable scent of blood in the air. At a certain point in Nitsch's work, there's a moment of transcendence where the baggage of performance art pretension falls away and the primality of the act itself is enough to justify itself. Translated onto film, there you realize you could be watching the ultimate super-8 gore epic, if not something much more troubling. It's real, in at least one sense, and it's incredible just how much you want to buy the grainy black-and-white footage as something legitimate and forbidden. The only thing close is the "Ritual ov Psychick Youth" from TOPY's *First Transmission* (discussed at length in issue #3), which is no small feat to approximate. I know there's some higher purpose to take away from the barrages of gore and nudity and various mutilations, and the ritualistic nature of the proceedings are impossible to overlook. It would probably drive me even madder to sit by and try to analyze Nitsch's filmed actions in any sort of detail. What appeals most to my sensibility is the fact that it offers a sort of visceral reaction not available in any other works of art I've come across. The immediacy, while off-putting and disturbing, is undeniable.

If none of this is convincing enough then maybe a more novel approach to Nitsch offers some more clues as to my fascination. Some of his later demonstrations have lasted over sixteen hours and multiple days, seemingly endless bloodbaths able to be captured in far greater scope thanks to the limitless potential of digital video. Also, for added compatibility with my self-defined parameters here, Stan Brakhage filmed one of Nitsch's actions for inclusion in his *Dog Star Man* series. Over the years, Nitsch and his non-disgraced cohorts have been slowly accepted into the world of highbrow art. That being

They were on her back like huge insects, but the terror she felt was worse than the pain when the nails of their sharp fingers ripped into the flesh of her back and her scalp. She heard the materials of her slip, dress and sweater tear, and felt the rush of warm outdoor air upon her skin, and the dampness, the tickling wet of blood down her back. She struggled

... something. Yet she couldn't leave. If she were here? *Wh* she'd been real insi- *f* they *ssica*, *S* the best experienced live. But until and unless that is a reality for me, these grainy little silent shorts pack all the material I need into an unsavory package.

The large, bending slowly and straightening as he felt for a lower step, his arms reaching out from his sides and the white china hands and fingers looking sharp as claws. His sweet, painted face had a terrible set look of no feeling, no conscience, no mind; yet he was coming down the steps toward her, and she knew in her terror that it was she that was drawing him, for some reason she didn't know. She couldn't even cry out, or move. He had come within two yards of her, his painted, chipped eyes gazing expressionlessly up at her, his sharp fingers reaching wh



Research Anderson's Favorite Albums of 2020:

Obnox- Savage Raygun
Crazy Doberman- Illusory Expansion
Soccer Mommy- color theory
The Cowboys- Room of Clons



Yung Nudy- Anyways
Crazy Doberman- Hypnagogic Relapse and Other Penumbral Phenomena
Ozzy Osbourne- Ordinary Man
The Cowboy- WiFi on the Prairie



Denzel Curry- UNLOCKED
Dog Whistle- Dog Whistle
Hayley Williams- Petals For Armor
Crazy Doberman- Waking Up with Moths in Your Ears



Umbra Vitae- Shadow of Life
Xibalba- Años En Infierno
Tim Gick- Não Há Laranja / Scrying Glass Eye
Metallica- S&M2



The Munchman
by Peter Vilardi



They say you don't get high the first time. Bullshit. I'm livin' proof, pal. Two hits of ditch weed out a Bob Marley bowl on a screened porch, my life changed forever. Didn't taste great - these days, I'd pitch it in disgust - but, at ten years old, it did the trick all right.

Yeah, I was ten. Is what it is. Can't unsmoke it, can I? Can't undo whatever damage it did to my still-developin' brain. If anything, made life easier. 'Fore weed, I was a basket case. Anxiety, depression, whole nine. Kids at school were merciless. I had no friends, and home was the pits. I was a fuckin' pariah. Those dirty little bags of grass kept me sane. Made me forget I was s'posed to be a loser.

And when I started sellin' a few years later? Man, those kids changed their tune. Word got around I had dank, sure enough, now I was everyone's best friend. Kids who used to bully me started givin' me the royal treatment. Drove me around, did my homework, even ran errands for me. What people won't do for a bag of weed. Fact, I think it makes 'em--

Hold on.

You see that?

You'll know it you see it. Over there by the trees.

Nothin', huh?

Never mind. Where was I? Right: weed makes some folks just *crazy*.

Gotta understand, wadn't like it is now, where every kid on the block's got a G Pen, or a little piece they hide in their sock drawer. Back then, in my shithole town you couldn't get weed anywhere, let alone good weed. Best you could do was a bag of mids from your friend's older brother behind the bleachers. You'd be lucky it wadn't oregano, even luckier you got enough of a buzz to get your money's worth. 'Til I came along. Then you were good and high.

See, I was tired of ditch weed - and at the age most kids *started* on ditch weed, too. I wanted loud. Knew how to get it, too. Had a connect the next town over, older dude who didn't give a fuck how young I was. Told him I wanted hydro, he laughed right in my face. Then he gave me a blunt, told me it was "top-shelf shit," made me smoke it in front of him to prove I wadn't a bitch. Sure showed him. By that time, my tolerance was so high I didn't feel a thing. I knew it was mid, and he knew he couldn't hold out on me no more. After that, it was time for the *real* top-shelf shit. In my town, you wanted it, you came to me.

Anyway, that was when I started seein' The Munchman. That was when he started watchin' me.

I'll never forget it. I was sixteen then. It was Gabe, Robby and me hotboxin' Robby's dad's old VW van, which hadn't run in years. It was on cinderblocks out back at the edge of the property line, right near the woods. That was our spot. We called it Smoke Central. Not a very clever name, but we were high when we came up with it.



Any time I got my hands on a new strain, we'd pack a bowl, or roll up a joint, and head for Smoke Central to see if it was good as my dealer said. Next day at school, Gabe and Robby'd talk up the new weed,

tellin' anyone who'd listen it was, like, *nuclear* shit, man. Sometimes they'd lay it on pretty thick, 'specially if it didn't get us that high. But we were serious stoners, so we figured anything we could stand would knock most kids on their asses. Course, if the joint knocked *us* out halfway through, we knew what we had. I charged plenty more for that stuff. And I gave Gabe and Robby their cut, too - usually in weed.

Those days, Pop was long gone, only his huntin' knife left behind. Ma was never around, always "stayin' out late with friends." Knew what *that* meant. If she caught me, or someone else did, she couldn't say shit. Had enough to worry about besides me sellin'.

I'm fuckin' ramblin'. My bad. You know how you get when you're high. Anyway:

It was Gabe, Robby and me, in the van like usual. Just after sundown. We were blazin' a joint, listenin' to Robby's dad's old Floyd tapes on the boom box, just shootin' the shit. Typical Tuesday. I was takin' a pull from the joint, and I remember it was gettin' dark. Light from the cherry was the only light at all.

Then, of course, looked out the window, and who'd I see? The motherfuckin' Munchman.

Wadn't called the Munchman yet. But there he was. At first I thought he mighta been the cops, or maybe Robby's dad. But nope - just this weird old dude, sorta tall and spindly, wearin' some kinda hooded cloak or somethin'. It was far away, and I was pretty stoned, so that was all I could suss out from a distance. He was standin' in the woods behind Robby's place, his head cocked to one side, just lookin' at us. Didn't like it. Felt like he was starin' right at me.

After another puff, passed the joint to Gabe and pointed the old man out. What was odd was, Gabe and Robby ain't see him. I mean, he was *right* there. And he was still lookin' at us. I insisted, pointin' out the window, I saw this guy - and I *did*. Couldn't believe it, but Gabe and Robby swore up and down they didn't see a thing. Was pretty shook, I won't lie to you. Thought they were playin' a prank on me. But they laughed it off, clowned me for bein' paranoid.

They musta thought I was higher than shit seein' people in the woods who weren't there. And I can't blame 'em. It's classic stoner shit: smoke a joint, get real high, look around, see somethin', look back, it's gone. Spooky. But it's all in your head. Right? And I was pretty high, I'll admit it.

Thing is, I knew he wadn't in my head. Saw him right there. Could *still* see him. Only Gabe and Robby couldn't. That didn't sit right with me.

Hey, you gonna pass that, or you gonna keep standin' there holdin' it?

Thanks.

Any case, Gabe came up with the name. Gabe bein' Gabe, he was lookin' for the first excuse to rag on me. So when Robby offered me his bag of chips, drawlin' "You gotta munch, man," Gabe took his chance. Saw that shit-eatin' grin on his stupid face, knew exactly what he was gonna say.

"The Munchman!" he laughed. "You saw the Munchman... 'cause you got the munch, *maaaan*." Robby damn near fell over laughin'. Dumb son of a bitch. I laughed along with him, but on the inside I was pissed off. What's more, I was a little frightened. 'Cause the Munchman, or whatever they wanted to call him - he was still there, lookin' right at me. When I walked home that night, he stared after me all the way home.

Well, Gabe and Robby may not have seen the Munchman for themselves, but they sure remembered him later. He became a runnin' joke. We'd be hotboxin' the van, and out of nowhere, there was Gabe's shit-eatin' grin again. "Hey, Mike, you see the Munchman? He starin' at us again? Maybe you eat these

Oreos, he'll disappear." And Robby would just laugh and laugh that dumbshit laugh of his. Like I said, I'd laugh too, but I didn't like none of it. Didn't like Gabe and Robby makin' fun of me.

Didn't like that he *was* still there.

Fact, every night I was there, out by those woods at Smoke Central, I saw the Munchman. Course, I didn't say shit about it. These assholes would laugh it up all the more, 'specially if I let on how scared I was gettin'. But that old fuckin' man - he was still there. Not movin', just watchin' us. Watchin' *me*, in fact. I was sure of it.

Why else would he keep lookin', no one could see him but me?



What was *real* weird about the whole thing was, the Munchman turned out to be a pretty good name for him. Every time I saw him, started gettin' hungrier than shit. Didn't notice right away - those were the teenage years, after all. Most kids my age, they'd eat up a storm, wouldn't think twice about it. First few times, I chalked it up to regular old munchies. And I could kill a tube of pizza Pringles well before I started seein' the Munchman.

Thing is, no matter how much I ate, I was always hungry. Never felt full, and even when I took a shit it wadn't different or

nothin'. Chips, pretzels, cookies, soda pop - down the hatch into a black hole in my stomach. Never came out the other end. I know, I know: teenage metabolism, stoner appetite. But it was weird. No matter what I ate, I was never satisfied.

And it got weirder when I started losin' weight. Used to be pretty healthy, but in a few months I was skinny as a rail - skinny as the Munchman, come to think of it. Gabe and Robby sure thought of it. They clowned me more and more. Even Robby came up with a few zingers - stupid ones, but zingers anyhow. Said I oughta look like a double-decker bus the way I ate, but instead I was lookin' more and more like the Munchman every day. I didn't like that a stupid fat dumbfuck like Robbie thought he could tease me for the way I ate. But I ain't say shit.

Truth be told, I was gettin' pretty goddamn sick. Not just with Gabe and Robby's bullshit, really sick. Felt like I was wastin' away. I'd eat 'til I was sick of eatin', and it just wouldn't take. Got thinner and thinner, weak as a waif. And people noticed. By that time, most kids didn't come 'round to buy weed from me no more. Skinnier I got, more looks I got. Saw kids whisperin' in the hallways when I walked past. They ain't think I heard 'em, but I did. Heard 'em say I had some kinda *problem*.

"Proly it was all that weed he smoked when he was a young kid. Musta fucked somethin' up down there in that stomach of his. Sure screwed up his brain. Didn't Gabe tell you? Said Mike was seein' things. Said he told him he saw this old man. Crazy, right?"

Hey, got another one here, if you want a hit.

None for you? Suit yourself.

Anyway, I thank God that part of my life's over - I hadn't figured out how to eat again, I proly woulda died. But, at that time, I didn't know what to do. Didn't know if I'd make it through the year.

Finally, one day I'd had enough. 'Nother day at Smoke Central, and I was startin' to get sick of the whole thing. Not sick enough I wouldn't spark one up, but it was gettin' to that point. We got pretty damn high - I got higher than usual, mind you, 'cause my stomach was so empty all the time. Then Gabe and Robby started in again, havin' a real good time of it. Said if I kept up gettin' thinner, I was gonna turn into the Munchman. Just an old man, thin as a rake, barely strong enough to stand there starin' at people.

It made me more than mad - it made me goddamn pissed. Not just what they said, either. It made me so fuckin' mad 'cause, all the while, the Munchman was *still* standin' there, watchin' it all happen. All those months, all that wastin' away - I *knew* the Munchman did it. He was doin' this to me, had to be. And Gabe and Robby? They were practically helpin' him.

I was so mad I up and left, right there. Course, they called after me, hollerin' jokes all the way. Lazy fucks they were, they couldn't be bothered to follow me. I decided, then and there, I was sick of this Munchman bullshit. Wadn't scared no more, just angry. Didn't care if those dumbfucks thought I was goin' crazy. I was gonna do somethin' about this. Had to, or I was gonna die. I knew it, deep down.

So I did it. Walked straight up to the Munchman. He was still standin' there, same way, same place, wearin' that damn cloak of his. I told him he was a fuckin' asshole, I'd lost a ton of weight 'cause of him, I'd lost respect from all the folks who used to kiss up to me 'cause I was the weed man, and ever since the day I saw him he'd been ruinin' my life, day after day after day. Course, he didn't react. He just stood there, watchin', like he always did.

I heard Gabe and Robby behind me. They weren't laughin' no more. Now they were starin' too, whisperin' nervously to each other. That made me so goddamn pissed I couldn't see straight. I turned around, started hollerin' at 'em. Told 'em I was sick of their jokes and their bullshit about me gettin' thinner, and I knew they only hung out with me to score free weed, and they were no friends of mine for spreadin' fuckin' rumors, and they could take their fuckin' smartass comments and shove 'em up their dumbshit assholes. Thought they'd light me up, but they just walked away lookin' sad. Made my stomach feel even emptier to watch 'em go like that.

That was when I felt a hand on my shoulder.

Didn't even have to turn around, I knew who it was.

Felt his breath on the back of my neck.

Felt him lean in, real close-like.

Heard him whisper in my ear. Told me somethin' made the hair on the back of my neck stand up.

Was I scared? Hell no. I was thankful. Thankful to him for what he told me.

Told me what it was I had to do.



Hey, sure you don't want a hit of this? It's real good, don't be shy.

All right. Don't worry, now, I'm almost done.

So next day, I came into school, tail tucked between my legs. Went up to Gabe and Robby and made a big show of bein' sorry. Told 'em I shoulda never said all that stuff, ain't really mean it, and they were still my best pals in the whole world. Only real friends I had. Wanted to make it up to 'em, only way I knew how. Told 'em to meet me at Smoke Central. Had a very special new strain for 'em to try, just them and no one else. And I told 'em bring snacks, 'cause this one was gonna give 'em the munchies.

Gabe and Robby said they sure would, there was nothin' between us, and they'd stop bustin' my balls about the Munchman so much. They didn't know I'd take it so personal, and they'd never bring it up again if it made me feel that bad. Didn't know they were serious or not, but I knew they'd never pass up a chance to get high for free. That was all right by me.

Sun was low in the sky by the time I got to Smoke Central. There they were, waitin' for me, bag of snacks in hand. I thanked them again for bein' so understandin' about the other day, for bein' such good pals. Told 'em we oughta try somethin' different this time. Maybe go on a little walk in the woods, maybe bring the weed and snacks with us. Said I knew it wadn't what we always did, but I wanted to do somethin' new with 'em, show 'em this secret place I found. They liked that just fine. So we rolled a joint and took it with us. I led the way.

We walked and walked, deeper and deeper into the woods. Now Gabe and Robby, they weren't so sure we'd find the way back. Asked me if I knew the way we were goin', if we could get back OK, on account of

it gettin' so dark and all. I told 'em don't worry, I knew where we were goin' even if they didn't. They shut up after that.

Was dark when we got there. This small glade, a clearing deep in the heart of the woods out back behind Robby's place. Trees stretched on for miles. We were pretty well tucked away back there - for a secret place, it was hidden real good. We sparked up the joint, smoked it for a while, just watchin' the sunset through the trees. We got good and high. Felt the munchies comin' on.

All a sudden, we heard a branch crack underfoot somewhere out in the woods. Then another one, closer now. 'Nother one, right near the glade. Gabe and Robby, they were pretty frightened. Me? Wadn't scared. I knew what was what. Just stood there starin' at 'em, like I was you know who. Course, right away they saw that and accused me of pullin' somethin', some sorta prank to get back at 'em for all their bullshit. Wadn't no prank. Knew that much.

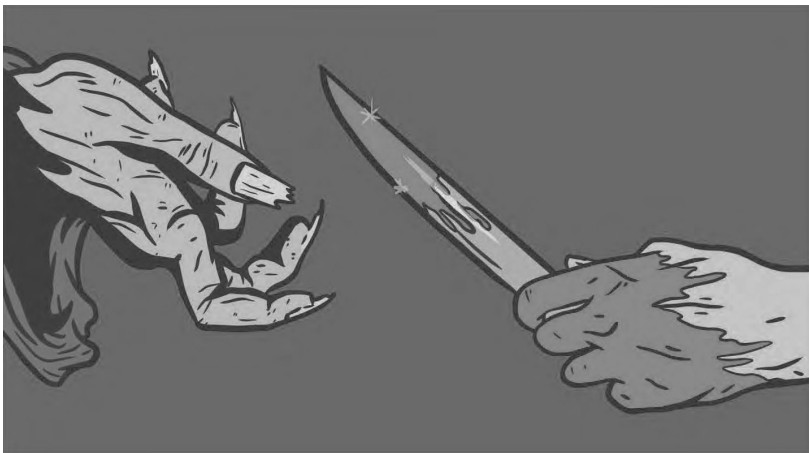
"You see that?" I said, pointin' over yonder. "There he is."

It was the Munchman, standin' there at the edge of the clearing, watchin' us. Watchin' me. Seein' what I was gonna do.

Course, Gabe and Robby couldn't see him. They knew who I meant, though. Said I was freakin' 'em out, thought I was bullshittin'. That's how come they didn't see it comin'. I told 'em look again. They turned around. That's when I did it.

Caught Gabe right in the throat from behind with Pop's old huntin' knife. Slit it once, just right. He went down pretty quick, gaspin' for air, blood drippin' from his neck, soakin' the leaves underfoot. Never saw it comin'. He was dead all right.

Robby hollered somethin' awful. Wadn't no one around to hear him, but he hollered just the same. Started runnin', but that fat bastard, he couldn't run so good. Even tried to take the snacks with him. Stupid fuck. 'Fore long he was dead too.



Stood there for a while, in that clearing, catchin' my breath. By then it was dusk, no one else around. Just me and the Munchman in those woods. Looked up at the Munchman. He saw the whole thing. Was standin' there like usual. Coulda sworn I saw a smile under that cloak. I knew what to do next.

First went to work on Robby. Carved him up real good, like a regular butcher. Started rippin' his flesh, choppin' up muscle. Even took out his organs. Was so hungry I couldn't tell you.

And when I got that first bite of him? All that fat on him? God *damn*. He was so good. Ate Gabe too, ain't ashamed to say it. Felt like I hadn't eaten in months - and I *hadn't*. This was my first meal. Ate and ate 'til I couldn't no more, and my belly was full - *real* full. You know how you get when you're high.

When I had my fill, I turned back to the Munchman. Knew he was smilin' now, even in the darkness, even under that cloak. He was real pleased with me. I did just like he said. Wadn't scared of him no more. He was my friend now, I knew that much.

Walked up to him, handed him Pop's old knife, blood glintin' off it in the moonlight. He reached out his hand and took it. Smiled at me a little longer. Then he turned around, and off he walked, back into the woods, branches crackin' underfoot as he went.

Was sorry to see him go, but I knew I'd see him again. One of these days, I was gonna see him again.

As for Gabe and Robby? Folks went lookin' for 'em, it's only natural. Didn't find much left of 'em. Local news said it was some kinda wild animal, maybe a pack. They were picked clean to the bone. Investigation ongoin', they said. Somethin' like that. Never found the snacks, neither - I took those with me. Wadn't hungry, but figured I might be later.

After all that, didn't have trouble eatin' no more. Few weeks, I was back to my old self, like nothin' ever happened. Kids at school started treatin' me normal again. Think they felt sorry for me, losin' my only pals and all. Never thought I'd have anythin' to do with somethin' like *that*. 'Fore too long, life was back to normal.

Well, 'cept for one thing.

Every time I smoked - no matter where, no matter when - I saw him. Just standin' there like always, watchin' me. Sometimes I waved, most times just looked at him. He didn't do nothin', but I knew he was happy. Knew he was my friend. Knew I'd made him proud.

Anyway, I'm ramblin' again. That's weed for you. Damnedest thing, ain't it? Always brings a story out.

So I wanna ask you again, my friend:

You see that?

You see him, out there by the trees?

Right there.

Right there in that cloak of his. Just standin' there watchin' us. My old pal the Munchman.

He's smilin' somethin' big tonight.

Dunno about you, but I could use a bite to eat.



Research Anderson's Favorite Matches of 2020:

Kenny Omega & Hangman Page vs. The Young Bucks (AEW Revolution)
Trish Adora vs. Suge D (GCW For The Culture)
Lee Moriarty vs. Daniel Makabe (S.U.P. Swing of the Axe)

Chris Dickinson vs. Priscilla Kelly (Beyond Wrestling Wear Sunscreen)



Eric Ryan vs. AKIRA (ICW No Holds Barred Vol. 6)
Calvin Tankman vs. Erick Stevens (Black Label Pro Erick Stevens Presents Professional Wrestling)
Matthew Justice vs. Joshua Bishop (AIW Thunder In Indianapolis)
The Rejects vs. Awesome Odyssey vs. Hysteria (Unsanctioned Pro 8: Ignorant)



The Undertaker vs. AJ Styles (WWE Wrestlemania 36)
Kenny Omega vs. Laredo Kid (AAA Triplemania)
AJ Gray vs. ACH (Glory Pro Wrestling Are Ya Wrestling, Son?)
Lee Moriarty vs. Alex Shelley (AIW Built to Last)



Kota Ibushi vs. Minoru Suzuki (NJPW G1 Climax 30 Night 13)
Go Shiozaki vs. Takashi Sugiura (Pro Wrestling NOAH 20th Anniversary- NOAH The Chronicle Vol. 4)
Joey Janela vs. Yoshihiko (GCW Homecoming)
Alex Colon vs. AJ Gray (GCW Homecoming)



Psychopath: At Large: An Interview with Jim Larsen

Every so often, I search for the movies that I'm interested in, hoping that some other bit of information will have materialized online. It isn't always the easiest task, given the general obscurity I cotton to, but sometimes it pays off. Among the annals of SOV inanity and greatness that occupy my mind at all times, Jim Larsen's 1994 release *Nigel the Psychopath* always hovers near the top of my personal list. A simplistic slasher tribute, the movie appears little more than a group of teenagers running around the woods and dying off one-by-one as they try to battle the titular villain. Beneath this surface, however, is a testament to teenage exuberance and the undiminished fan spirit. It's the most fun I can have watching a movie, and that reward has hardly diminished over the years. Luckily, a recent search turned up not only Jim's website (<https://themindofjimlarsen.com/about/>), but also his YouTube uploads of several versions of the film. I reached out and he gave me this fantastic interview, more in-depth and informative than I ever could have hoped. Celebrating this sort of micro-cinema is the exact reason I work on this zine, and for someone as obsessed with marginalia as I am, this interview is an absolute dream.

NIGEL THE Psychopath

Describe your beginnings in filmmaking, and what initially attracted you to it. What was your original inspiration with the story of *Nigel The Psychopath*?

I remember being really, really young, like two, three, four years old and I would watch TV. I would watch whatever my parents had on—*Happy Days* comes to mind, and whatever other sitcoms were on TV in the early 70's. I also remember watching Hanna-Barbera cartoons on the weekends, stuff like *The Flintstones*, *The Jetsons*, *Yogi Bear*, all that stuff. I would watch these shows, and of course, I was very young, so I did not give much thought to the process that went into making them. They were just there. You turned on the TV, and if by magic, a show was on.

The fact that there was a process that went into making these shows—writing, producing, directing, acting, all that never crossed my mind. I just totally took them for granted, like any kid would do, I'm sure.

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sunshine on her body and in her soul.

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Then I started school. I remember in my early years of elementary school—Kindergarten, 1st grade, 2nd grade, and on up, there was this guy who came to the school to show us his travel movies that he shot on his own. He would set up his projector and a screen, and he would show us these movies he made from his travels all over the world. These were silent movies, and he had a microphone hooked into an amplifier and would narrate them. I would spend as much time watching him narrate the movies as I did watching the movies, because I was fascinated by him. It hit me—this guy made these movies we are watching! These movies didn't appear out of nowhere, somebody actually made them! People make the movies and TV shows I watch! That changed how I watched TV at home, and movies when I started going to the theaters to watch movies. I became very interested in the process that went into production. When I learned to read, I liked to read the credits at the end of the shows just to see what the jobs were.

That planted the seed in my mind that I wanted to make movies too. I wanted to be like that guy at school and have my own movie camera. For years I wanted one and thought about the kinds of movies I would make when I finally got one. Then, on my 16th birthday, my mom got me a Super 8 movie camera. This was 1986, before video cameras were a thing yet for consumers, so a Super 8 camera was the coolest thing I could ever dream of owning. It was silent, of course, and each film cartridge only gave three minutes worth of film that I had to send away to be developed, but it was enough to get me started and get me hooked on filmmaking.

My early works consisted mostly of taking shots of the farm animals that we had, and my friends and family just acting goofy. I took it on some scout camping trips and filmed the goings on. The camera also had a stop motion feature, so I dabbled in clay animation, creating the character, Omar the Dog and did a series of films about him. Omar is dog who is very territorial, and will kill or mutilate anybody who sits on his favorite park bench. I made several of those movies, including one where he falls in love with a lady dog, and one where he kills Santa Claus.

Nigel the Psychopath came about as my answer to *Friday the 13th*, which was very popular when I was in high school. I wanted to do my own version of a crazy killer attacking people. The original Super 8 film was shot in the woods near where I grew up on a piece of land owned by Jimmy Dean, country music singer and sausage mogul. What happened was, there was some drifter who wandered back there and chopped down a bunch of trees and made

climbing them.

With curiosity drawing her again, she went to a

himself a log cabin. He was trespassing, and when lunch trays started going missing from the local elementary school (somehow they tracked the theft down to him) the police informed him that he needed to move on. This left an empty log cabin, and I thought, wow! What a great location to film a movie.

The original *Nigel* movie was the only film to be shot there. Unfortunately, there were other teenagers on the road who thought it would be fun to go knock down and destroy the cabin, so it didn't last long enough for any sequels.

it had been intended for many people, a trestle table with long benches on each side. There were cook tables, too, made of thick, solid oak, their

What inspired you to expand the short to feature length? Was the decision to work with video instead of Super 8 purely budgetary? Did you have any plans for a home video release, or was it just some fun with friends?

The idea to create a feature length film didn't come to me until a few years after making the last in the series. In the early 90's, I got the idea to combine footage from all the *Nigel* videos I shot into a single film. The thing is, *Nigel* was originally a five-part series with each part having its own distinct beginning, middle and end. By the time I shot part 2, I had saved up my money and bought myself a VHS camcorder. Upgrading to VHS was just the next logical step. By then, it was 1987 and I was in the 11th grade and taking a TV production class at a vocational education school where I had access to video editing equipment.

The thought to release it to the public in any way was never on my mind. It was just some fun I was having. I remember my 11th and 12th grade homeroom teachers used to let me play them for whoever wanted to come in and watch them before homeroom started. In the 90's, I was a *Fangoria Magazine* fan. I thought it would be cool to sell *Nigel* in the classified ads. There was a lot of copyrighted music in the original versions, because as I mentioned, homeroom was my audience up until then, and I could get away with that, but I didn't want to run into any trouble trying to sell anything I shouldn't, so I decided to combine the footage into a new movie with original music and called it "Nigel the Psychopath at Large."

Apart from your high school short *Class of 1986*, did you work on any other movies before making *Nigel*?

My first film I ever made that told an actual story was months before *Nigel*. I was in the 9th grade and had a project to do about Romeo and Juliet. I made a movie about the fight scene between Mercutio and Tybalt. It turned out awesome. I brought my projector to school and showed it to all of my teacher's classes. I only got a B on the project though, because I was late finishing it. I needed extra time to get the film developed.

Who were some filmmakers who inspired you going into the movie? Additionally, were there any underground or non-mainstream filmmakers you admired at the time?

Back then, I was really into the slasher genre. I loved the *Friday the 13th* and the *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies, so it is fair to say those influenced me. At the same time, *Police Academy* was pretty popular too, and I liked those just as much. The one movie that has had the greatest impact on me though was *Back to the Future*. I was 15 when that movie came out, and I loved it. I really dug each and every character, the setting, the plot, and the music. It was exciting, it was funny, it was ironic. I think that was the movie that really opened my eyes to how powerful music can be in a movie. I've seen that movie more times than any other.

To be honest about underground film makers at the time, I hadn't really discovered any yet. The only movies I was watching aside from what I saw at the theaters were what I could find on VHS at the local video store, and they weren't carrying anything too crazy. I lived too far out in the country to get cable TV, and satellite TV subscriptions weren't really a thing yet the way it became with Dish Network and Direct TV. I was though, quite fascinated by David Lynch. *Blue Velvet* remains a favorite movie of mine.

Are there any good stories from making the movie? About how long did production take specifically (i.e. working on weekends)?

Annabelle.

The first three *Nigel* films were each shot in a day. They were all pretty simple. Parts four and five took more than one weekend to make. That scene that takes place in the park where those two people are at a table talking about how much they hate "That stupid kid, Sid" had some reality to it. Sam was a friend of mine from school, while the kid was my cousin. The thing is, Sam really did not like Rob. He found him to be annoying. And since Rob played Sid, Sam channeled his dislike into the scene, even goofing up and calling Sid Rob at one point. It was really easy for Sam to go on about how stupid Sid was and how he hated his guts.

Of course, a number of different actors played Nigel, each with a different shaped body. It's something the audience just has to accept with a suspension of disbelief. Who played Nigel in any given scene depended on who was available that day to play him. In all, seven different people played him. Five of the people were white, one was black, and one was albino.

There are a few nods to Sylvester Stallone in *Nigel*, me being a lifetime fan as I am. I may be the only one he gets them, but they are there. One is where Rob and Joseph are preparing to hunt Nigel down and those children run behind them. That was a nod to *Rocky II* where all those kids run behind Rocky while he trains. Another is that fight scene between Rob and Nigel- total homage to Rocky. And finally, when Alderman and Covina are looking for Nigel in the park, Covina says, "Psychopathy's a disease, and I'm the cure." That was a take on *Cobra* where Stallone says, "Crime is the disease. Meet the Cure."

still the face of a doll, beautiful and set in its beauty.

Rob Hayward steals the show as Chubby (not to mention a score of other characters), and is probably my favorite part of the movie, as well as in *Buttcrack*. What was it like to work with him on both movies?

Rob is funny in these movies. The thing about Rob is that he was super eager to be a part of these productions. I met Rob in high school, and I wasn't really friends with him at first. I started getting attention as "The guy who makes movies" after showing my first few projects to my classes, and Rob wanted that kind of attention too. I remember he told me as much, and I figured, if this guy wants to be an actor for me, I'm sure I can use him. And of course, he went on to play multiple roles in *Nigel*. And he was always willing to say any line and do pretty much anything I asked him to do.



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"Jessica! Jessica!"

The call was real. It was Mrs. Archer's voice, it
tho... He's fun to watch in *Nigel* because he really isn't an actor. He's just a guy
w... saying lines and reacting to the situations, and in every scene, he's just
h... himself. His own self was the character he played every time. It's fun to watch
J... because that lends a quality surrealness to his roles. He's not the only one, I
N... know. Nobody in the movie is a true actor, which is part of what makes the
M... entire production entertaining.

a... I liked coming up with lines for Rob to say, because I knew he would say
le... them as Rob, whatever character he was playing. That's why he has the best
sl... lines in the movie: "Man, you be illin' when you should be chillin'." "Oh my
M... God he's dead!" Even the scene where he is driving the car and tells Joseph to
fe... get in has some bizarre quality to it, "Come on, get in! Go!" It's not with the
be... urgency you would expect somebody to react to a kid who says, "There's a
A... crazy killer after me!" Which of course wasn't delivered with the urgency you
him, given that *Nigel* history.

"Where on earth have you been, child? Look at

Would you mind talking a bit about the various versions of the movie? From the Super 8 short, to the five-part series, the originally-released "At Large," and the current director's cut?

The first one was shot at that log cabin near my house way out in the country. The cast of that one consisted of three of my cousins who lived down the road- all three of the females in the movie. The rest were friends from school. The thing is though, I lived 20 miles from my school. I lived on a dirt road that existed between the two tiny towns of Arcola, Virginia and Aldie. I went to high school in the town of Leesburg, 20 miles away though. Everybody else in the movie lived in Leesburg and had to drive all the way out to where I lived and try to find my house. By the time I was ready to shoot part two, it made more sense for me to drive to Leesburg and shoot it at locations there. It was a way more central place to meet up with everybody.

Every one of the movies in the original five part series had their own story. These stories all got blended in the recent director's cut, but in *At Large*, footage from parts one two and three all get jumbled up in the opening dream sequence. The story of part one, which I know you know about on

window. Jessica was growing tired of sitting there, and had left in the

Youtube, introduces the character of Nigel, but the audience doesn't learn anything about him. He's just a Jason-esque killer attacking teenagers who are hiking through his territory, which of course ends with a "he's not really dead ending."

Part two gave Nigel a little more personality, and with the addition of sound because it was shot on video, I could have more fun coming up with dialog for the actors to say. At this point, I realized that what I really wanted to do was make my own kind of a slasher film that went against the conventions of a normal slasher film, which is a style I of doing things I really like—going against conventions. That is really evident, I do believe, in *Buttcrack* and the zombie genre. Anyway, with *Nigel* it is more about the reactions the characters have to this crazy killer out there. I still love the lines in that movie, "Jesus Christ, what happened to him?" and "Goddam, I wonder if he's all right!" And then the completely ridiculous plan to catch Nigel. "You sit here, and if you see him coming, scream and I'll come running and help you out!" "Oh, okay!" While shooting that one, I told Sammy who was playing Nigel, "Okay, now stand there and laugh, and then walk away." I didn't have a particular laugh in mind, but then he did that goofy "Nigel laugh" that I use over and over again in all *Nigel* movies thereafter.

Part three was made around the same time that "Stand By Me" was in the theaters, and I wanted to parody the "Want to see a dead body?" idea. And of course, the dead body was a result of Nigel. And again, the main focus was more on the characters' reactions to the killings than the killings themselves, with those kids deciding to "Get the dude who did this!" Part three has what to me is the funniest scene in the entire series- where Rob checks Todd's pulse and jumps back exclaiming, "Oh my God he's dead... this killing has got to stop!" It's the way he said it. It still cracks me up. That one ended with Rob and Joseph celebrating Nigel's death, but then Nigel gets up, grabs the camera and shoves it away—another "He's not really dead" ending.

Then came part four. I remember starting to shoot part four over Christmas break in my senior year, on New Years Day, 1988. I don't remember how many days we got together to shoot that one, but it was more than one. This is the one where the story really starts to take shape. This is where the two police officers- Sheriff Alderman, played by James Kirk, and Deputy Covina, played by me, Jim Larsen get involved to track Nigel down. Why are they tracking him down? Not for the public's safety, but because the police chief, also played by James Kirk, wants the reward money. This was a more

and she fell backwards, her head striking the floor. She sat up, the pain radiating from the back of her head to the front and almost killing her, but even



involved shoot than the first three, as I wanted to utilize new settings, such as the two different parks, and the walking trail and that creek. This is also the part where the weirdest fight scene I think that has ever been shot takes place. There is that scene where Nigel and Rob are fighting, but you will notice as brutal a beating as Rob is taking, Nigel never actually lands a punch. You just have to accept and go with the idea that Nigel is beating the shit out of Rob. This part ended with Nigel placing the mask on the Chief's dead body and Alderman and Covina falsely believing the Captain is really Nigel the Psychopath.

Part five was shot later in the spring when the weather was getting warm, but it picked up where part four left off, which was shot in winter. So, in the anniversary edit, I left in the shot where we take our coats off and say, "It's getting kind of hot." Part five starts with Alderman and Covina talking about, "Man, I can't believe the captain was really Nigel the Psychopath." What I remember about this one is that it took a very long time to shoot, partly because I had a bigger story I wanted to tell. I wanted to explain Nigel's origins, and show a human side to the character, again, going against traditional trappings of the slasher genre where the killers are always truly evil and psychotic. Nigel's motivation to kill are anything but evil. They are the exact opposite of evil. I wanted to have fun with that idea, so I had the reunion of Nigel and his brother, Chubby where they actually hug, and of course the ending with Nigel and his supposed mother. That scene with his mother was, of course, my own take on the scene in *Friday the 13th* with Jason and his mom. Part five ended with Nigel being stuffed into the back of the police car and being hauled off to jail. Most slasher films probably would end with the killer being hacked up and killed by a survivor who watched all his friends die, but that would have been boring. I could have ended it with some twist where Nigel breaks out of the handcuffs and kills the driver and steals the car, but nah. I wanted to end with people thinking, hmm... I guess Nigel really did get arrested. I wonder what will happen next?

When I put together *At Large* back in 1994, I focused on telling the story of parts four and five, since that was the true heart of what *Nigel* was all about. I still wanted to use some footage from the first three, and since I needed a dream sequence anyway, I used the footage from the first three for that. But in 2019 when I did the Director's Cut, what a waste of footage it would be to limit it to a dream sequence. There is some good stuff in parts 1-3. But it also seemed extemporaneous. If the story is really what happens in parts four and five, all that 1-3 stuff is a long build up to it. That's when I got the idea to add

narration and sort of put the focus on Joseph, although that was kind of stretch, I think it worked out okay.

The director's cut is essentially a different movie and makes a lot more sense of things, so why the order of the "At Large" edit? Where did all of the extra footage come from/go initially?

With the Anniversary edit, I had all that footage to use, and I wanted to keep a good pace for the movie and hopefully not let it drag. I decided to just sort of blend it all together, introducing story elements early on instead of waiting to put it in later. There is lots of extra footage in there that has never been seen before. The reason for that is because I tried on two separate occasions to film a part 6, neither of which were ever completed, but I got some interesting footage from both attempts. The first attempt at a part 6 was shot after high school graduation when I was student at college at Montana State University. All the footage with the Cowboy and Sheriff Stinky after the credits of the Director's cut came from that shoot. That was never finished due to lack of interest from the people I was trying to get to act in it. After shooting what we shot, people just didn't want to do it anymore. The second Nigel film with the old crowd, and after we shot some stuff, life was just too much in the way with jobs, college, other friends and relationships, and other interests. By then, the old crowd was drifting apart and we just couldn't seem to motivate ourselves to finish that movie. There is still a lot of footage that has never been seen from these shoots, which I may put together as an "extra footage reel" for Youtube.

When I did the "At Large" edit, I was still using analog VHS editing equipment, which was nowhere near as cool or sophisticated as the computer editing I can use today. Zipping through a digitized video file is so much quicker and easier than fast forwarding and rewinding through VHS tapes to find the shots I want, so it was more fun to do. Computerized editing today gives you a lot more bells and whistles to play with too, especially when it comes to transitions.

It was not like the others, it was just a plain little doll with a cloth body, even cloth feet and hands. There was something about playing with the baby doll.

I know Todd Cook's Cemetery Cinema ended up releasing *Nigel* in 1994 or so. How did you become aware of Todd and his company and come into contact? *Nigel* definitely fits in with a similar sensibility to his work, so were you a fan of his films? What was the distribution like?

When I advertised "At Large" in *Fangoria*, Todd saw it. He contacted me about releasing it on Cemetery Cinema, and I didn't see any reason to say no. He promised to pay royalties via Paypal, and I got a few bucks for it. It was pretty cool. I was not familiar with him before that, but have since seen some of his work. It's entertaining.

I didn't realize until finding your website that the movie was shot between 1986-1989. What was the reason for the gap in between the production and release of *Nigel*?

Like I mentioned, the original intention behind these movies was to entertain my friends and to show it in my homeroom at school. I didn't have a wide audience in mind yet. It wasn't until I realized I could probably sell a few copies via a *Fangoria* classified ad that I decided to release it. My movies have always gotten positive responses from people who have seen them, so I thought it would be cool to offer *Nigel* on a wider scale.

dangerous and evil spirit that had Jessica thinking she

Did you have any screenings or any sort of limited release on your own before the Cemetery VHS was distributed? I noticed an ad in an issue of *Fangoria* (August 1992) that seems to suggest you sold the title yourself for a bit.

No public screenings or release. Just selling in *Fangoria*.

as she reached it, and she began to struggle to open it again when she saw in the darkness the movements of

Was there any mention of the film or coverage in fanzines or magazines of the day? If so, what types of notices did you attract?

There was none. It's gotten all its attention via the internet in these modern times. Every so often, I do a search on "Nigel the Psychopath" and have found

a number of forums discussing it. It's found its niche. People are talking about it. I think that is pretty cool.

her side. She stumbled on, across the kitchen and

Do you have any thoughts on the video market and fan climate that enabled so many shot-on-video features to see release and find their way into the hands of other like-minded fans? Any particular experiences with other shot-on-video movies yourself?

I think it is cool that people can not just make, but market their stuff so easily these days. The internet makes it so easy to share your stuff, not just posting it online, but advertising it if you want to sell it. The tricky part is standing out. You have to come up with something truly unique that will capture people's attention—something original, something to make people say, "Yes!" I think Youtube has enough cute cat videos. It's time to make Youtube videos about cute cats clawing people's eyes out or something.

trickling wet of blood down her back. She struggled

I got back into making homemade videos to share with friends in 2008 while living 11 years at a retreat center on the Big Island of Hawaii. I lived at a place called Kalani Oceanside Retreat which was run by a community of volunteers. I had a friend named Hsini, and thought it would be fun to cast her as a killer, so I created "Hsini the Psychopath." It's very different from Nigel, and is filled with in-jokes about volunteer life at the retreat center. This turned into six part series culminating in 2016 in which I depicted Kalani being destroyed. It was kind of prophetic, that movie. We got together to watch it for the first time the same day the Kilauea volcano eruption began in Lealani Estates, just a few miles from us. That volcano was a factor in Kalani closing down very soon after. Part one of those is on Youtube. The whole series is posted on a Facebook page called "The Coalition for a Safe Kalani," along with a number of short videos I made there. Anybody who wants to is welcome to find me on Facebook and friend me and find that page. There are several other videos I made with a good friend of mine at Kalani that are on Youtube on the "In Touch With Kalani" Youtube channel.



Clearly you don't take the movie too seriously—both during its making and today—and a lot of this spills over into how much fun it is to watch. What do you think of the movie's lasting cult appeal to younger fans?

Can you imagine *Nigel* if I had tried to make a serious horror movie? It would've sucked. Unless you have a truly kick ass original idea and a knack for presenting it, I think horror is hard to pull off. I for one don't claim to have that knack. If I had tried to make *Nigel* a straight up horror film, it would have been just another wanna-be slasher film that was an obvious rip off of the ones that were popular in the 80's made by a wanna-be teenage-filmmaker who thinks too much of himself. Why do that? I've always had a good sense of humor and a knack for finding absurdities in common conventions and situations. I decided to play into that strength, as I have continued to do with other things I have done. That's what made *Nigel* what it is.

That fact that it's out there and people are liking it flatters me. I hope it inspires young people to get out there and make videos of their own, and that they will endeavor to be unique and creative. I hope they will do more than just imitate what's already been done, but come up with their own twists on things, create their own characters and stories.

With curiosity drawing her again, she went to a

In the credits to *Buttcrack*, I noticed you thank a lot of significant underground figures: Todd and Lisa Cook (if I'm not mistaken), the New York Underground Film Festival and Todd Phillips, the Chicago Underground Film Festival, not to mention Channel 4 UK and MTV. Do you mind discussing what type of support/interaction you had with these organizations?

I think you may be mistaken about Todd and Lisa Cook, I don't recall them being in the movie, and I don't have a copy handy to see what all is in the credits. I don't remember including them in the credits. And Todd Phillips? I don't know. The Chicago underground Film Festival was because before we completed the full feature film, we shot just enough footage to create a trailer. This trailer was shown at the Chicago Underground Film Festival. Channel 4 UK and MTV? Sorry, but I'm drawing a blank on those. I don't remember why we mentioned them in the credits. There was never any kind of a deal with them. Maybe they mentioned Mojo Nixon being in the movie or something on one of their news shows. I really don't remember.

too, but the posts were mere posts, not pillars as they were on the front and sides. The back yard was

The reference to *Nigel* at the end of the movie is a nice call-back to your earlier film. It also points to some sort of regional pride or identification. Was this intentional?

It was intentional. Of course, it was an in-joke for whoever caught it, but also a self-congratulatory nod to my own progress, saying, "Look how far I've come- from those old VHS movies to this."

How did you come into contact with Troma and get them to release *Buttcrack*? What kind of response did you get after its release?

We bought an advertisement in *Fangoria* to announce the completion of *Buttcrack* to see if anybody would express an interest in it, and Troma did. It's a perfect addition to the Troma cinematic universe. When it was released, the internet was still fairly new, so there wasn't any social media yet like there is today, but I'd do searches on the title to see what came up and found various discussion forums talking about. Die-hard Troma fans loved it. Other people either loved it or were confused about it. Not sure what they were expecting- the title is "*Buttcrack*," it is released by Troma which is known for really shlocky, really ridiculous movies, it has a no-name cast and Mojo Nixon. Where they expecting *Gone With the Wind*? I also get a kick out of reading reviews on Amazon and IMDB and other places. The bad reviews are even more entertaining than the good ones.

Any future plans for your movies? I know you've uploaded the director's cut of *Nigel* recently, and the tape can be bought from Screamtime Films, but are any other editions forthcoming? Any new projects you have or would like to work on?

I don't plan on any other editions of *Nigel*. The Anniversary cut is my idea of the definitive version. I read a few things people were saying about "At Large" in some discussion forums and noticed some stranger took it upon himself to upload it to Youtube, which is fine; I'm glad it's out there. Having Screamtime sell it on VHS made sense twenty-some years ago, but in these modern times, it's too antiquated a format to expect too many people to still use. It was never intended to be a money maker anyway, so I'm glad it's easy to find and easy to watch. But I wanted to have the definitive version of it for my own. That's when I decided to do the 33rd anniversary cut. I had digitized all the footage and was able to do it on my computer. It gave me a chance to reimagine the story and tell it more completely.

I do see a future for the characters. I've written an outline for what I imagine as a big screen remake. It's important to me to stay true to the original version and the story it tells, so it will take place in the same time period and have the same characters and will stay logical to what is already established about the story. What do we know about what happened to Nigel after the end of the movie? He was arrested and hauled off to jail. At the end of *Buttcrack*, which was released in 1998, mention of his grave was made, so he's either dead or faking it by then. If you watch the director's cut all the way to the end past the credits, you know he was let out of jail and shipped to a mental institute in Texas where was eventually released and made his way to Montana. How does all this connect? I want to answer that question with the new screenplay. I can't say I have aspirations to make this movie myself, but would be very happy to sell it to the right production company who can do it justice, should an interest be there.

Another thing I have been working on is a novelized version of *Buttcrack* that takes the original story and includes the ideas I had for parts two and three. It'll be called *Buttcrack and Beyond: A Novel of Epic Proportions*. Once that is done, I will self-publish it like I have my other books.

You've ruined my mother's picture. You've ruined my
You've clearly been very busy since then, writing a ton of books and covering all sorts of various bases. Would you mind telling me a little more about your various endeavors and interests?

Sometime in the early 2000's I started having some rather mystical experiences that put me on an esoteric path. This led me to move to Hawaii and left me with a deep interest in meditation and understanding tarot cards, particularly how tarot cards can be viewed to represent pieces of ourselves. I've written three books on that subject so far, with the next one in the works. I've also written a four-part series of books containing tidbits of wisdom that have come to me while meditating. I call them *Knowings from The Silence: Simple Wisdom for an Enlightened Life*. I've written a few screenplays since *Buttcrack*, including *Buttcrack 2: Crack of Dawn*, the story of which will be

incorporated into the *Buttcrack* novel I mentioned. I also wrote "All my Chitlins" which is a spinoff from *Buttcrack* all about Hank the Redneck's family and his brother, Sean Wayne Payne. There was another I wrote about some people in Washington State who have their own religion where they shoot dead cows so the cows will carry their sins to Heaven. The name of that one is "Jesus Cow."

I write a lot of poetry, mostly dark and humorous stuff and perform it in Hawaii. I've published two books of that, and so far have read one as an audiobook for Audible.com. I mentioned the *Buttcrack* novel; there is another novel I've been working on and off on for a while. And then there is Spoony. Spoony is the name of a kid who ruins things for everybody that I have been writing stories about. So far, the first two are available for Kindle. The third story will be done within a day or two of this interview. It's very close. I'm going to get an Audible version of all three once that one is done. These stories were inspired, in a roundabout sort of way by the six months I lived at a Buddhist monastery in India with Tibetan monks. I also keep a tarot card blog at foolspath.tarot.com.

What else? Oh yeah, there is a movie out there called *Action USA*. Somehow, I got to be friends with the producer of that movie and he asked if I wanted to write a screenplay for a new movie he wants to make. He gave me a brief outline of what he wants in it. I'll see if I can find inspiration to write that.

she lived when she was not really awake. were not
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I'm particularly interested in amateur cinema, and I noticed you
describe *Nigel* as an amateur film. What does this description mean to
you? Is there any unifying aspect of your filmmaking or overall goal
when making a movie?

Amateur, to me, means just grabbing a camera, get a few friends to act for
you, have at least a basic script, and go out and shoot your movie. Keep it fun.
If you're having fun making it, that fun will come through to your audience.
Make the movie you want to make without worrying about what you think
people will want to see. Make a movie you'd like to see and like-minded
people will appreciate it. This is what unifies all my projects, the longer stuff
and the short films. They are all about me having fun. They have found the
audience they found because other people like that sort of thing too.

when she told them the name was really Jessica, still
they called her Annabelle. Did that mean they hadn't
heard her? That their ears, made of china, couldn't
really hear? Had it all been a dream?

"Jessica! Jessica!"

The call was real. It was Mrs. Archer's voice,
though she had said that's what it
was. She had said that's what it



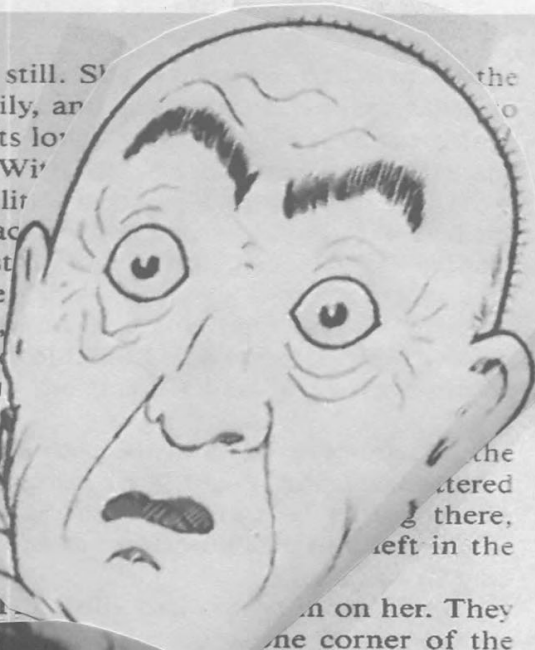
little voices were still. Still
time, a bit uneasily, and
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as if the
s feet.





She sat up, the pain radiating from the back of her head to the front and almost blinding her, but even so

